

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, AO, BE, CU
SUBJECT: ANGOLA: BELGIAN CHARGE REPORTS ANGOLAN DESIRE FOR
RELATIONS WITH U.S. AND COMMENTS ON SITUATION IN ANGOLA

REF: BRUSSELS 7456

1. FOREIGN MINISTRY'S SOUTHERN AFRICAN AFFAIRS OFFICER (VAN
BRUSSELEN) PROVIDED US AUGUST 22 WITH FOLLOWING INFORMATION
OBTAINED FROM BELGIAN CHARGE IN LUANDA (LECOMTE) WHO IS
CURRENTLY ON LEAVE IN BELGIUM. INFORMATION SUPPLEMENTS BELGIAN
CHARGE'S LASTMAJOR REPORT FROM LUANDA (REFTEL).

2. ACCORDING BELGIAN CHARGE, ANGOLANS NOWAPPEAR DESIROUS OF
OPENING RELATIONS WITH THIRD GROUP OF COUNTRIES DESCRIBED BY
ANGOLAN FOREIGN MINISTER DOS SANTOS (REFTEL), I.E. THOSE COUNTRIES,
INCLUDING U.S. AND U.K., PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED AS FOES.

3. MORE SPECIFICALLY, BELGIAN CHARGE SAID ANGOLANS WOULD BE
WILLING TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH U.S. PROVIDING THAT
FOLLOWING TWO CONDITIONS ARE MET: (A) THAT U.S. ACCEPTS CUBAN
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PRESENCE IN ANGOLA; AND (B) THAT U.S. SHOWS THAT IT IS IN FAVOR
OF NEW LOOK TOWARD AFRICA BY MAKING A "GESTURE". NATURE OF
GESTURE WAS NOT SPECIFIED BUT OBVIOUSLY MEANT OFFER OF MATERIAL
ASSISTANCE.

4. BELGIAN CHARGE COMMENTED THAT IF CUBANS WERE WITHDRAWN ANGOLA
WOULD CRUMBLE OR EXPLODE, AND THAT WITHOUT CUBAN OR SIMILAR HELP,

ANGOLAN REGIME WOULD BE UNABLE TO RUN COUNTRY. HE STATED THAT CUBANS ARE DISCREET AND DISCIPLINED, WITH NOT MANY CUBAN MILITARY VISIBLE IN LUANDA, BUT SAID CUBANS ARE NOT LIKED BY LOCAL PEOPLE. CUBAN DOCTORS IN PARTICULAR HAVE BAD REPUTATION. SAYING THEY ARE PROBABLY IN REALITY ONLY MEDICAL ORDERLIES, CHARGE CALLED THEM "BUTCHERS".

5. BELGIAN CHARGE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT NETO SEES NEED FOR OPENING ANGOLA TO WESTERN COUNTRIES, AND IN PARTICULAR FOR HAVING CLOSE RELATIONS WITH PORTUGAL. HE SAID THAT OF WESTERN EUROPEANS CURRENTLY SEEKING TO ESTABLISH ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS, ITALIANS HAVE BEEN FAIRLY SUCCESSFUL AND FRENCH APPARENTLY ARE HAVING SOME SUCCESS IN PETROLEUM DEALS.

6. BELGIAN CHARGE SAID HE HAS GOOD RELATIONS WITH CUBAN AMBASSADOR IN LUANDA. HE SAID SOVIETAMBASSADOR CURRENTLY IS KEEPING VERY LOW PROFILE, AND THAT THERE ARE STRONG DIFFERENCES OF OPINION BETWEEN SOVIETS AND CUBANS AS TO HOW COUNTRY SHOULD BE RUN.

7. DESCRIBING LIFE IN ANGOLA, BELGIAN CHARGE SAID MATERIAL SITUATION IS VERY DIFFICULT, WITH MEAT VIRTUALLY UNAVAILABLE, AND RICE AVAILABLE ONLY WHEN IMPORTED FROM ABROAD. HE LIKENED SITUATION TO THAT OF ZAIRE IN 1964-66. CHAMBERS

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